

POL 220: U.S. PUBLIC POLICY

SPRING 2018

Dr. Kate Knutson

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OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays and Thursdays 9-10:15 am and Wednesdays 2:00-3:30 pm or by appointment

CLASS TIMES: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:30-4:20 pm in Old Main 05

CLASS EMAIL ALIAS: s-pol-220-001@gustavus.edu

This morning I listened to news from NPR, a station born of the 1967 Public Broadcasting Act. As I ate breakfast, I read the government-mandated nutrition label on the box of cereal. I left the house for work, where a portion of my income is retained by the government to pay for various services, including social security, which may or may not be available by the time I retire. The regulations that guided my hiring and employment, the programs that protect me from poverty and sickness, the laws that ensure I have access to clean air to breathe and water to drink, these are just some of the many ways in which government policies impact my life on a daily basis.

How do policies that affect our lives so dramatically come into existence? What factors affect the decisions that government officials make? Why do we have this set of policies rather than something else? Why do the policies that we have benefit some at the expense of others? We focus throughout the semester on theories of public policymaking and decision-making using policy case studies to help develop our understanding of these theoretical principles.

This course satisfies the SOSCI requirement. By the end of the semester, students in this course will

- ✓ Demonstrate knowledge of major concepts and methods used in the study of public policy;
- ✓ Describe the historical development of the theories and principles of public policy;
- ✓ Analyze influences on social institutions and human behavior; and
- ✓ Apply disciplinary knowledge to understand ethical and social issues in the study of public policy.

This course addresses the following student learning outcomes identified by the Department of Political Science:

- ✓ Students will be able to identify and analyze key political institutions, processes, and issues at the national level.
- ✓ Students will make arguments that are cogent, compelling, and well-substantiated

REQUIRED TEXTS

I expect you to complete all of the assigned reading before class. Additionally, you should prepare to discuss the readings by being an engaged reader; underlining key passages and writing down questions or comments you have related to the text are both helpful means of achieving this.

- ✓ Thomas Birkland, *An Introduction to the Policy Process*, 4th Edition (2016)
- ✓ Suzanne Mettler, *The Submerged State* (2011)
- ✓ Selected readings available through Moodle electronic reserve. Print these and bring them to class.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

Assignment	Value	Due
Take Home Exams (2 of 3)	30% (15% each)	2/27, 3/13, and 3/27
Day at the Capitol-Related Work	15%	3/27 and 3/29
Discussion Leading	10%	TBA
Response to DL Questions (5)	10% (2% each)	4/17, 4/19, 4/24, 4/26, 5/1, and 5/3
Policy Analysis Paper	25%	5/22
Class Participation	10%	Ongoing

Take Home Exams: The take home exams feature one essay question requiring you to apply the theoretical material to a public policy of your choice in a 2-page (double spaced) paper.

Day at the Capitol-Related Work: Each year, students from private colleges in Minnesota convene in St. Paul to lobby in favor of public funding for higher education. Our class will take an instrumental role in preparing Gustavus students to participate in this advocacy event. This will involve intense planning and preparation in the first half of the spring semester as well as participation in the 2018 Gustavus Day at the Capitol on Tuesday, March 27. This is an all-day event, so check your schedules immediately and come and talk to me within the first week of class if you have a conflict.

Discussion Leading: You will lead the class in a discussion of the day's topic and reading.

Response to DL Questions: DL groups will email three questions to the class in advance of the discussion they lead. For five discussions (not one you lead), you will select and respond to one of the questions in a way that demonstrates your understanding of the assigned readings and course material in a 1-page (double-spaced) paper.

Policy Analysis Paper: One 5-6 page (double-spaced) paper analyzing the policy of your choice.

Class Participation: Your participation is an integral part of this class. Learning is an active process that requires you to take the reins in asking questions, seeking out information, working collectively to achieve understanding of complex problems, and critically examining your assumptions about how the world works. Participation includes attending class on time (obviously, you can't participate if you're not here), completing the assigned readings, contributing to class discussions with thoughtful comments, listening attentively, and engaging with the ideas raised by classmates. Many of the topics we will discuss are controversial and it is important to remember that reasonable people can hold different opinions concerning these topics. Please be thoughtful and respectful with the words you use and the way you talk about ideas and people with whom you disagree. Do not assume that everyone agrees with your position; I would like you to operate under the assumption that at least one person in the class disagrees with your position.

There are two class activities that happen outside of our regular meeting time. Please mark your calendar for the following events:

- Monday, March 26, 4:30 – 6:00 pm: Day at the Capitol Training Workshop
- Tuesday, March 27, 7:15 am – 6:30 pm: Day at the Capitol

COURSE POLICIES & GUIDELINES

Academic Honesty: Gustavus Adolphus College standards for academic honesty apply in this class. If you have questions about these standards, please consult the College Honor Code. Your decision to remain enrolled in this class will serve as your agreement to abide by the following statement for each assignment you submit: ***“On my honor, I pledge that I have not given, received, or tolerated others’ use of unauthorized aid in completing this work.”*** The Gustavus Guide also states that, “a student may not submit work that is substantially the same in two courses without first gaining permission of both instructors if the courses are taken concurrently, or permission of the current instructor, if the work had been submitted in a previous semester.” You must attribute any thoughts or ideas that are not your own to their source through in text citations even if you are not directly quoting a source. I will give plagiarized work a zero and report the case to the dean.

Attendance: You are an adult and therefore, you do not need to notify me when you miss class and you do not need to explain your absences to me. Please do not send me an email asking if you “missed anything important in class”! If you miss class for any reason, it is your responsibility to contact a classmate for notes. If you have any questions about those notes, please see me. Missing more than two classes will impact your participation grade regardless of the reasons for the absences. Missing more than five classes may result in failing the course.

Accessibility Resources: Gustavus Adolphus College is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in its programs. If you have a documented disability, or you think you may have a disability of any nature (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical) and, as a result, need reasonable academic accommodation to participate in class, take tests or benefit from the College's services, then you should speak with the Accessibility Resources staff, for a confidential discussion of your needs and appropriate plans. Course requirements cannot be waived, but reasonable accommodations may be provided based on disability documentation and course outcomes. Accommodations cannot be made retroactively; therefore, to maximize your academic success at Gustavus, please contact Accessibility Resources as early as possible. Accessibility Resources (<https://gustavus.edu/care/accessibility/>) is located in the Center for Academic Resources and Enhancement. Accessibility Resources Coordinator, Kelly Karstad, (kkarstad@gustavus.edu or x7138), can provide further information.

Cell Phones, Computers, and Other Electronic Devices: Turn off your cell phone and other electronic devices before class. If a cell phones rings or buzzes during class time, the owner will be asked to bring a treat to share with the entire class during our next meeting to compensate us for the distraction.

Grade Dispute: I am happy to meet with you to clarify feedback I give you on any coursework. It is important to me that you understand why you received the grade you did and that you are able to use feedback constructively to improve on future assignments. Any formal grade disputes must be submitted in writing to me no later than two weeks after the assignment is returned.

Grading Policy:

A	95-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	65-69
A-	90-94	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	60-64
		B-	80-82	C-	70-72	F	<59

Help for Multilingual Students: Support for English learners and multilingual students is available through the Center for International and Cultural Education's (<https://gustavus.edu/cice/>) Multilingual and Intercultural Program Coordinator (MIPC), Carly Overfelt (coverfel@gustavus.edu). The MIPC can meet individually with students for tutoring in writing, consulting about academic tasks, and helping students connect with the College's support systems.

Late Assignment Penalty: It is important to learn how to meet deadlines and manage your time in college. Assignments will be penalized 10% for each day (or portion thereof) they are late.

Research Help: You can always get help with your research at the library. Reference librarians will help you find information on a topic, develop search strategies for papers and projects, search library catalogs and databases, and provide assistance at every step. Drop-ins and appointments are both welcome. Visit https://gustavus.edu/library/reference_question.php for hours, location, and more information.

Title IX: Gustavus Adolphus College recognizes the dignity of all individuals and promotes respect for all people. As such, we are committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination including sexual and gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence like sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or is experiencing these types of behaviors, know that you are not alone. Resources and support are available; you can learn more online at <https://gustavus.edu/titleix/>.

Please know that if you choose to confide in me, I am mandated by the College to report to the Title IX Coordinator, because Gustavus and I want to be sure you are connected with all the support the College can offer. Although it is encouraged, you are not required to respond to outreach from the College if you do not want to. You may speak to someone confidentially by contacting the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART/CADA), Chaplains, Counseling Center, or Health Service staff; conversations with these individuals can be kept strictly confidential. SART/CADA can be reached 24 hours a day at [507-933-6868](tel:507-933-6868). You can also make a report yourself, including an anonymous report, through the form at <https://gustavus.edu/titleix/>.

TAKE HOME EXAM GUIDELINES

The take home exams require you to apply theoretical material to a particular public policy of your choosing. This policy will also be the focus of your final Policy Analysis Paper and these take home exams are designed to help you prepare for that assignment as well as to help me assess your understanding of the course material. I will provide you with a single essay question in class on a Thursday and your essay is due on the following Tuesday. Your essay must be no longer than two typed double-spaced pages (standard font and margins). The purpose of the strict page limit is to force you to focus on the most important pieces of information and to be succinct in your writing. Communicating complex ideas clearly and concisely is one of the most important skills you can learn from this class.

Your grade is based on the following criteria:

1. Development of a clear thesis (argument) that answers the question posed in the assignment.
2. Use (and definition, where appropriate) of relevant course concepts and theories. This is your chance to demonstrate to me that you understand the language of the course and that you are able to apply key concepts and theories to real policy problems. The more you can integrate these concepts and theories into your answer in accurate ways, the easier it is for me to see that you understand them. ****This category is weighted twice what the others are because of its importance (Poor (0-12), Average/Good (13-16), Very Good/Excellent (17-20)).**
3. Accurate discussion of the public policy with clear and specific connections between the course material and the public policy. Your answer should demonstrate a clear and factually accurate understanding of the policy.
4. Writing mechanics (including spelling, grammar, and style).
5. Overall depth, sophistication, and originality of your analysis and argumentation.

	Poor (0-6)	Average/Good (7-8)	Very Good/Excellent (9-10)
Thesis	No thesis developed in the assignment	Thesis lacks detail on either topic or comment and/or not developed in the introduction	Clear, original, and interesting thesis (containing both topic and comment) developed within the opening paragraph
Use of course concepts and theories**	Does not use multiple course concepts and/or uses all course concepts incorrectly or inappropriately	Uses multiple course concepts and theories but some are used incorrectly and/or in inappropriate contexts, or uses a small number of course concepts accurately and appropriately	Seamlessly integrates all relevant concepts and theories accurately and appropriately including providing definitions
Discussion of policy	Discussion of the policy is inaccurate and lacking sufficient detail	Discussion of the policy is mostly accurate but is missing some important detail; examples are overly general	Accurate and thorough discussion of the policy; uses specific examples from the policy in conjunction with the theory
Writing style	Uses language that impedes meaning because of multiple errors	Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity, although writing may include some errors	Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free
Overall impression	Lack of depth, sophistication, and originality; demonstrates little mastery of the material	Essay is strong but lacking in depth, sophistication, and/or originality	Depth, sophistication, and originality of the essay demonstrates mastery of the material

DAY ON THE HILL PROJECT GUIDELINES

The entire class will collaborate on a single project—working with the Minnesota Private Colleges Council to advocate for Minnesota’s State Grant program. The grant program helps make higher education affordable for Minnesota undergraduates with financial need. Approximately 1 in 4 undergraduate students from Minnesota receives this form of need-based aid.

Our class will divide into three project groups:

The Grant Program Group (GPG) will focus on research of the state grant program and legislative proposals related to the affordability of higher education. The goal of this group is to prepare research-based informational materials about the policy and arguments regarding the policy.

The Legislator Research Group (LRG) will focus on background research on members of the Minnesota State Legislature. The goal of this group is to identify the legislators who will be targeted, research their positions on higher education policy, research the factors related to their constituents that might affect their position on the grant proposal, and prepare an informational summary of personalized information on each legislator.

The Student Advocacy Group (SAG) will focus on educating the Gustavus community about how to be effective advocates for this program. The goal of this group is to prepare research-based information on effective advocacy techniques.

What do I intend for you to gain from participating in this project?

- Development of interpersonal communication, organizational, and administrative skills
- Increased substantive knowledge of the policy area
- Understanding of the role organized groups and citizen activists play in the policy process

Your grade for this assignment (worth 15% of your final grade) is based on two components:

1. Group Produced Materials and Presentation: You will produce written reference materials to aid students attending the event and will present your information at the training session. I will evaluate both your written materials and your presentation for accuracy, clarity, professionalism, and overall presentation.
2. Individual Assessment: You will write a 2-3 page (double spaced) description and evaluation of your work that does the following:
 - Provides a thorough description of your contribution to the project
 - Provides an evaluation of your contribution by discussing the strengths and weaknesses of your contribution
 - Identifies something you would do differently if you were to approach this project from the beginning again
 - Discusses 2-3 specific things you learned or ways you grew as a result of this experience

The individual assessment can be written in narrative form (I statements are fine; no need for a thesis) but should still use formal style and grammar.

DISCUSSION LEADER GUIDELINES

Your small group is responsible for leading our discussion on the topic based on the assigned reading. Your group will develop a series of discussion questions to help us engage with the reading. Your job in this activity is not to teach the reading or the policy to us, but rather to help us think more deeply about this issue and to engage in a discussion of the questions and problems raised by this issue.

To facilitate our discussion, you will prepare three written discussion questions and send a copy of the questions via email to everyone in the class at least three days before the discussion. You are welcome and encouraged to develop additional questions for the actual discussion.

Discussions sometimes happen spontaneously, but most of the time it takes careful planning on the part of the discussion leader. You should come to class with some specific topics to discuss in mind and should lead the discussion by posing a variety of fact-based, thought-provoking, and/or controversial questions to the class. Some things to keep in mind:

- You should not spend the entire class period talking “at” your classmates, but rather should work to encourage them to participate in the discussion. If you are doing all the talking, it is not a very good discussion!
- Sometimes it takes a few seconds (or minutes!) after you ask a question to get a response. Silence is fine; sometimes people just need time to sort out their thoughts.
- Feel free to use different methods of encouraging discussion: small groups, role-playing, writing, games, etc.

Your grade is based on the following criteria:

1. Development of relevant and provocative discussion questions provided in advance (including organization, spelling, grammar, and style)
2. Discussion leadership (asking questions clearly, facilitating discussion, asking appropriate follow-up questions, engaging all members of the class)
3. Connection of case study to course concepts and theories
4. Effort devoted to making discussion interesting and accessible to classmates
5. Equitable participation of all group members.

RESPONSE TO DL QUESTIONS GUIDELINES

DL groups will email three questions to the class in advance of the discussion they lead. For three discussions (not one you lead), you will select and respond to one of the questions in a way that demonstrates your understanding of the assigned readings. Typing this response in advance helps you to prepare for the discussion and helps me assess your understanding of the readings. These responses should be no longer than one double-spaced page in length.

Your grade is based on the following criteria:

1. Thoughtfulness of your response. Your response takes the question seriously, engaging with it in a way to reflect critical thought and analysis. You should develop a clear thesis in your response.
2. Engagement with reading. Your response references specific parts of the reading.
3. Connection to course concepts and theories. Your response clearly draws upon course concepts and theories to address the question.
4. Writing mechanics (including spelling, grammar, and style)

These papers will be graded on a check-plus (A), check (B), check-minus (C) system.

POLICY ANALYSIS PAPER GUIDELINES

- Pick a federal, state, or local public policy that interests you. This should be the same policy you used for the Take Home Exams in the first half of the semester.
- Thoroughly research the policy. Examine multiple high quality primary and secondary sources relevant to the policy.
- Draft a 5-6 page (double-spaced) paper (Not including bibliography).
- Your policy analysis should include the following components:
 - A description of the policy
 - A thesis connected to a policy theory
 - A discussion of policy objectives and tools
 - A discussion of the policymaking process
 - A discussion of supporters/opponents and key arguments
 - A properly formatted bibliography (Use APA or Chicago style citations)

	Poor (0-6)	Average/Good (7-8)	Very Good/Excellent (9-10)
Thesis/argument	No thesis		Development of a clear and compelling thesis
Research	Inaccurate research or absence of any high quality sources		Accurate and thorough research using multiple high quality sources
Objectives and Tools	Little to no clear explanation of the policy goals and/or tools		Clear and thorough explanation of the primary goals and policy tools of the policy
Policymaking process	Little to no description of what path the policy or proposal took		Clear and thorough description of what path the policy or proposal took
Actors and Arguments	Little to no description of supporters and/or opponents		Clear and thorough description of supporters and opponents and their central arguments
Connection to course material	Little to no incorporation of relevant course concepts and theories		Clear and consistent integration of relevant course concepts and theories
Writing style	Uses language that impedes meaning because of multiple errors		Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free
Overall impression	Lack of depth, sophistication, and originality; demonstrates little mastery of the material		Depth, sophistication, and originality of the essay demonstrates mastery of the material

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Date	Topic	Read	Due	In Class
1	2/13	What is public policy?	--		Selection of policy topics
	2/15	The policy environment	Birkland 2	Ideas for 2-3 policies of interest to you	Discussion of policy analysis paper topics
2	2/20	The political system	Birkland 3		DAC work group preferences; Researching public policy
	2/22	The role of official actors	Birkland 4		Exam #1 distributed
3	2/27	The role of unofficial actors	Birkland 5	Exam #1	
	3/1	Agenda setting	Birkland 6		Doug Minter
4	3/6	Policy change	Baumgartner & Jones; Kindgon		
	3/8	Policy design	Schneider & Ingram		DAC work time; Exam #2 distributed
5	3/13	Policy types	Birkland 7	Exam #2	DAC work time
	3/15	Decision-making	Birkland 8		DAC work time; Exam #3 distributed
6	3/20	No Class	--	Exam #3	DAC work time
	3/22	Day at the Capitol Practice	--		DAC work time
7	3/26	Lead DAC Training Workshop	--	DAC handouts	
	3/27	Day at the Capitol	--		
	3/29	DAC Debriefing	--	DAC Individual Assessment	DLG work time
8	<i>Spring Break: No Class This Week</i>				
9	4/10	Policy design	Birkland 9		Discussion of Policy Analysis Paper
	4/12	Policy implementation	Birkland 10		DLG work time
10	4/17			Response to DLG questions	DLG #1
	4/19			Response to DLG questions	DLG #2
11	4/24			Response to DLG questions	DLG #3
	4/26			Response to DLG questions	DLG #4
12	5/1			Response to DLG questions	DLG #5
	5/3			Response to DLG questions	DLG #6
13	5/8	Tax policy	Mettler Intro & 1		
	5/10	The Submerged State	Mettler 2 & 3		
14	5/15	The Submerged State	Mettler 4, 5, & 6		
	5/17	Paper Conferences	--		
15	5/22	Wrapping up	--		
	5/25 noon			Policy Analysis Paper	